

Wright-Lester House  
301 South Friou Street  
Jefferson  
Marion County  
Texas

HABS No. TEX-145

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. TEX-145

WRIGHT-LESTER HOUSE

Location: 301 South Friou Street, southwest corner of Friou and Walker Streets, Jefferson, Marion County, Texas

Present Owner and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Dan Lester

Present Use: Residence

Statement of Significance: Although the house has been greatly altered, the construction techniques seen in the original portion are typical of those used in northeastern Texas in the mid-19th century.

PART 1. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Property for the house was purchased from Dan Alley in 1859 by Adeline G. Pitkin. Mr. A. U. Wright then purchased the property. In 1866, it was bought by George and Mary Todd. After changing ownership several times, the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Lester, purchased the property in 1940. (Information from court and family records of Evelyn Todd Small, Jefferson, Texas, provided by present owners.)
2. Date of erection: c. 1859 (Early Texas Homes, p. 102).
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Additions and alterations: The east portico and the one-story rooms to the west were added in 1941. A second floor was added by the present owners after a fire destroyed the upper section of the original story-and-a-half structure. Other alterations include the design of the fireplaces and the main entry doors and the widening of the stairway.

B. Sources of Information:

Bracken, Dorothy Kendall, and Redway, Maurice Whorton. Early Texas Homes. Dallas, Texas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1956.

Cameron, Rebecca M., and Lester, Ruth. Jefferson on the Bayou. Marshall, Texas: The Demmer Company, 1966.

3. Information on ownership provided by owner.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Although vastly remodeled in the 1940's, the structure of the lower section remains as originally constructed.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The original section was 52'6" (five-bay front) x 36'5". On the east, the portico is 10' wide. An addition on the west containing living room and bathrooms is 17'11" wide and 48'7" long.
2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Wall construction: Sawn-timber frame. Asbestos shingles cover the original clapboards of the first floor.
4. Porches: The front porch, with four large, square columns, was added in the 1940's. It is two stories high and has a wooden balustrade.
5. Chimneys: Brick, located on the interior, finished with plaster.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The front door, altered in 1941, now has a six-panel wooden door in a classical enframement with five-light transom.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Windows on the front (east) are wooden, six-over-six double-hung sash. There are shutters on the front windows only.
7. Roof:

Shape, covering: The main section and part of the 1941 addition have gable roofs. Over the front porch and the south section of the 1941 addition, there are flat roofs. The gable roofs have asbestos shingles and the flat roofs have built-up roofing.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The main section of the house has a central hall plan. On the first floor, a dining room and a kitchen are located on the south side of the hall whereas a drawing room and bedroom are located on the north. There are four bedrooms on the second floor. Ceiling height on the first floor is 14' and on the second floor 10'.

In the one-story 1941 addition, there are a living room, two bathrooms and mechanical spaces.

2. Stairways: The stairway, located in the central hall, has a double run with a wide landing. Balusters are turned, stringers are plain and the handrails are molded. The stairway was widened in 1941.
3. Flooring: Flooring in the main section is 2"-wide, tongue-and-groove pine. Flooring in the 1941 addition is 9"-square parquet.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are covered with wooden boards, finished with wallpaper. Ceilings are plastered and papered.
5. Interior trim: The baseboard is 5-1/2" high and has a molded top. The ceiling cornice is 4-1/2" high and also molded. Casings, none of which are apparently original, are molded.
6. Hardware: None of the original hardware remains.
7. Lighting: Modern electric lighting throughout.
8. Heating: Central heating. Four fireplaces are in operating condition. They have modern wooden mantels and trim.

D. Site:

The front door faces east. There are several large trees on the site and numerous bushes and hedges.

A garage at the rear of the house, driveway, and concrete walks are of recent date.

Prepared by Willard B. Robinson, AIA  
Supervisory Architect  
National Park Service  
September 1966

### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made in 1966 during a summer project financed by the National Park Service to record 16 structures in Jefferson and the near-by area. The summer recording team received the cooperation of numerous citizens and organizations which provided office space, lodgings, board, and research assistance. Among the cooperators were the Dan Lester Drilling Company, the Excelsior Hotel, Mrs. A. K. Payne, The Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club and the Marion County Chamber of Commerce.

The project was under the direction of A. Lewis Koue of the Historic American Buildings Survey's Western Office in San Francisco. Supervisor of the recording team was Willard B. Robinson, AIA, of Texas Technological College. The team was composed of student architects Bob J. Fong of the University of Idaho, David L. Bouse of the University of Nebraska, Donald Quackenbush of Washington State University, and Robert M. Swanson of the University of Texas. Photographs were made by National Park Service Photographer, Jack E. Boucher.